

(The President)

... "The Conference on Disarmament has an important role to play in strengthening the United Nations' ability to deal with the multifaceted challenges we will face as we move into the twenty-first century. Your agenda remains relevant and rich in potential. I am optimistic that your collective wisdom and the momentum generated by recent positive developments in the world at large will enable the Conference to produce genuine and viable agreements. There is a wealth of experience and expertise that can be put to use. The successful conclusion of your negotiations aimed at a comprehensive ban on chemical weapons would be a particularly notable achievement. We in Sri Lanka eagerly await the realization of such a convention.

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(Mr. Komatina, Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations)

... "Another priority is the completion of negotiations on a comprehensive chemical weapons convention. The urgency of finalizing this work was emphasized once again by the international community at the last session of the General Assembly, and has been underlined further by events in the Gulf region. Universal adherence to an effective ban could best be ensured through a global, comprehensive and non-discriminatory convention. I strongly believe that all necessary conditions have been met to achieve a balanced compromise. There is incalculable danger in allowing the existing political momentum to lapse through tardy action. Every effort must be made to step up negotiations and constructively address the fundamental political issues which stand in the way of

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success. The time has come, in my opinion, to give a decisive impetus to the Conference's work on the convention through a meeting at the ministerial level with a view to settling all the remaining points of concern.